

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. An IFN- γ production inducing agent which contains an effective ingredient capable of inducing IFN- γ production by immunocompetent cells, said effective ingredient consisting of a protein obtainable from mouse liver, said protein having a molecular weight of 19 ± 5 kDa as determined by gel filtration or non-reducing SDS-PAGE and a pI of 4.8 ± 1.0 as determined by chromatofocusing, comprising the amino acid sequences set forth as residues 26-43 and 79-103 of SEQ ID NO:2, and being capable of inducing IFN- γ production by immunocompetent cells.

2. A pharmaceutical composition comprising a pharmaceutically-acceptable carrier and an effective ingredient capable of inducing IFN- γ production by immunocompetent cells, said effective ingredient consisting of the protein obtainable from mouse liver, said protein having a molecular weight of 19 ± 5 kDa as determined by gel filtration or non-reducing SDS-PAGE and a pI of 4.8 ± 1.0 as determined by chromatofocusing, comprising the amino acid sequences set forth as residues 26-43 and 79-103 of SEQ ID NO:2, and being capable of inducing IFN- γ production by immunocompetent cells.

3. A purified protein which is a variant of a protein obtained from mouse liver capable of inducing IFN- γ production by immunocompetent cells and having an amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:2 where residue 70 is methionine or threonine, wherein said variant has the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:2 with one or more amino acid residues in SEQ ID

NO:2 replaced with different amino acids or one or more amino acid residues deleted or added to the N-terminus of SEQ ID NO:2 while retaining the biological property of being capable of inducing IFN- γ production by immunocompetent cells.

4. The purified protein according to claim 3, wherein said variant has one amino acid residue in SEQ ID NO:2 replaced with different amino acid residue.

5. The purified protein according to claim 3, wherein said variant has one or more amino acid residues deleted or added to the N-terminus of SEQ ID NO:2.

6. A pharmaceutical composition comprising a pharmaceutically-acceptable carrier and, as an active ingredient, the protein of claim 5.

7. A purified protein which has the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:2 where Xaa represents methionine or threonine.

8. An IFN- γ production inducing agent which contains, as an effective ingredient, the protein of claim 7.

9. A pharmaceutical composition comprising a pharmaceutically-acceptable carrier and, as an effective ingredient, the protein of claim 7.

10. A purified protein obtainable from mouse liver, which has a molecular weight of 19 ± 5 kDa as determined by gel filtration or non-reducing SDS-PAGE and a pI of 4.8 ± 1.0 as determined by chromatofocusing, has an amino acid sequence homologous to the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:2 where Xaa represents methionine or threonine, said homologous amino acid

sequence being obtained by replacing one or a small number of amino acids in SEQ ID NO:2 with different amino acids without substantially altering the biological properties of said protein, and wherein the purified protein is capable of inducing IFN- γ production by immunocompetent cells.

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